

Applicant: Eckhardt Jr. et al.
Application No.: 10/786,397

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Canceled).

2. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A feeder tray of claim 1 for balls comprising:

a hopper having an open mouth arranged to funnel balls dumped through the open mouth through a restricted outlet to drop into a ball entry area forming part of the floor of an alignment tray;

a tray floor for the alignment tray sloping downwardly from the ball entry area to a ball delivery area;

ball flow control means on the tray floor between the ball entry area and ball delivery area;

a downwardly sloping exit chute at a lower level than the ball delivery area and abutting the ball delivery area arranged to receive balls from the ball delivery area over at least a portion of the length of the abutment between the ball delivery area and exit chute; and

an exit outlet provided at the lowermost end of the exit chute shaped so as to allow single file passage of balls coming down the exit chute through the exit outlet, wherein the ball flow control means are arranged to slow the rate of travel of a proportion of balls rolling down the tray floor into the exit chute, wherein the exit chute has a forward end at which the exit outlet is located and a rearward end, and wherein the downward slope of the tray floor nearer the vicinity of the forward end is less than the downward slope at or near the rearward end.

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3. (Original) The feeder tray of claim 2 wherein the ball flow control means comprises a plurality of ridges on the tray floor, the direction of the ridges generally making an acute angle with the direction of the chute.